

ABSTRACT

A system and method for the secure distribution and consumption of electronic documents using a standard rendering engine. The documents have one or more usage rights associated therewith. A server stores at least one of the documents in computer readable form. A client having a standard application program including a rendering engine capable of rendering unencrypted documents for viewing is operated by a user. The client and the server are coupled by a communications network. A rights management module receives a request for at least one of the documents on the server from the client and delivers the document and a set of rights associated with the document to the client. A connection module adapted to be attached to the rendering engine receives the set of rights associated with the document. A user interface module adapted to be attached to the rendering engine controls the user's access to the document in accordance with the list of rights for the user associated with the document.